Carbondale Budget Change Rejected

Weston Plant Dominates Crowded Council Meeting

By RAY RINALDI

Looking more like a courtroom packed with spectators, attorneys, TV and a legal stenographer, Carbondale City Council conducted its regular session Monday night scrapping one proposed ordinance and approving several others.

Uppermost in the minds of most of the spectators was the possible location of the Fairchild-Weston nuclear plant in Carbondale, bringing with it some 300 jobs.

As Weston officials have not as yet selected the site, it is known that neighboring communities have been actively courting the Archbald-based plant.

The subject of the Weston plant was first raised a week ago when Councilman Charlotte Moro advised the city administrator, Peter Judge, that Weston officials were interested in looking at sites in Carbondale.

According to Judge, he advised Mayor Fred J. Mancuso in turn should actively pursue the location of the Weston plant in Carbondale, "Doing whatever is necessary to get Weston to select Carbondale."

Council scrapped a proposed ordinance introduced by president Michael Tolerico that would have cut the salary of finance director Joseph Masco from $13,200 to $11,275. The proposed ordinance also called for an increase in salary for street department foreman Paul Mizak, from $11,000 to $12,600, and sought to reinstate the position of accountant in the Community Development office, at the salary of $1,925, and to earmark $325 for office expenses for the health and building inspector. The proposed ordinance died for lack of seconding, following discussion by council on the merits of the amendments to the budget.

Present at the meeting was Atty. Joseph Lenahan, Scranton, representing David Adams Cable Television Co., who brought with him a legal stenographer asking council's permission to have the debate concerning the cable service recorded.

Council granted permission after solicitor John Cerra informed members they have "the benefit of qualified privilege" pertaining to anything that is put on the stenographic record.

"You can keep the transcript," Cerra informed the stenographer, "for what it's worth, but basically everything that is said is privileged, at least so far as the council is concerned."

Atty. Lenahan said he was there to try to resolve complaints registered against the cable company at the last meeting. "I'd like to respond to some of the issues and complaints, and we'd like to keep the stenographic record of that so there would be no problem with the newspaper reports later on."

Both councilmen Frank Grecco Jr. and Andy Leo expressed concern that the people who had registered complaints at the last meeting were not present to respond to Atty. Lenahan.

Given permission by council, Lenahan presented the cable company's side of the debate, showing cable filters that had been tampered with, allowing cable subscribers to receive the signal of Home Box Office without paying for the service.

Lenahan said that while many filters, which are attached to cable lines between telephone poles have been damaged, the Adams Co. was willing to reconnect the cable service to those homes which had their cable disconnected.

"The last thing Dave Adams wants to do, in reference to this," said Lenahan, "is actually take some kind of criminal action, even though his contract (with the city) provides it. If you will notice, there has never been any of the names of the individuals, nor has there been any publication of the addresses. Our simple remedial action is to terminate the service to their homes."

"We are more than willing," Lenahan continued, "to accomodate those people that have (been) terminated. We will agree to reconnect the service to their homes for the service charge, under $50."

Accordiing to Lenahan, the cable company has devised a system whereby any person may call the company anonymously if they choose, to advise Adams of a tampered filter. The company would replace the filter, no questions asked, no extra charge. The deadline for doing this would be March 1. After that date, the company would permanently terminate service to those homes found to have a damaged filter or one that has been tampered with.

A lengthy discussion followed Lenahan's presentation with one member of the audience questioning why the payment of cable service remains the same each month, even though that service is continually being interrupted.

Lenahan responded that the rates from Time/Life Co., proprietors of HBO, presented the Adams Co. with a fixed monthly rate which they must pay, but did not indicate if the service from Time/Life was interrupted at intervals as is the local service.

Council cut short the discussion, indicating they would prefer the complaints to be aired between representatives of the Adams Co., the council, and the complainant.

In other business, council approved a request from the Car-Tree Sales Co., Forest City, for the purpose of five acres of land, parcelled from the 12 acres presently available beyond the national guard armory, at a cost of $5,000 per acre.

The company, which manufactures shower curtains and other similar products, would construct a commercial building on the site. The company would employ initially between 40 and 50 persons. The request to council was presented by the Carbondale law firm of Judd, Schnessel and McDonough.

Council granted permission to the Committee to Restore City Hall for the use of the third floor office in the city hall building. The request, over the signature of S. Robert Powell, informed council they would do whatever is necessary to restore the office.

—Heard a request from the Department of Transportation to turn back to the City of Carbondale several main thoroughfares, including Brooklyn St. (Rt. 6) and Wayne St., up to Salem Mountain. Council instructed city clerk Mary Miligan to set up a meeting with PennDOT officials to discuss the matter.

—Approved an emergency ordinance amending and fixing the tax rate for 1982. Introduced by Moro, the ordinance sets 31 mills for general revenue purposes for each dollar of assessed evaluation, a tax in the amount of 3 mills on all tax-